

VZCZCXRO2592
OO RUEHCHI RUEHCN RUEHDT RUEHHM
DE RUEHML #1619 1910904
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 090904Z JUL 08
FM AMEMBASSY MANILA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1214
INFO RULSDMK/DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE 3571
RUEHXS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2828
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6411
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 9837

UNCLAS MANILA 001619

STATE FOR EAP/MTS
TRANSPORTATION FOR FAA
SINGAPORE AND TOKYO FOR FAA

SIPDIS, SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [EAIR](#) [ETRD](#) [BEXP](#) [RP](#)
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE CIVIL AVIATION UPDATE

REF: Manila 03743

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Immediately upon the return to the Philippines from the U.S. of President Arroyo, the Government of the Philippines established a new Civil Aviation Administration of the Philippines in order to fast track its effort to remedy civil aviation safety concerns identified by the USG in 2007 (reftel). A direct result of the very effective briefing of Philippine Congressman Puentevella by the FAA on the margins of the Arroyo visit, the President also appointed a Director General for the new institution and instructed him to move aggressively to establish an effective civil aviation safety regulatory system for the Philippines. End Summary.

¶2. Newly appointed Philippine Civil Aviation Administration Director General Ruben F. Ciron told econoffs on July 8 that he recognized the severity of the current deficiencies in Philippine civil aviation regulation, and that he hoped to meet with FAA officials at an early opportunity. At the same dinner meeting, Congressman Monico Puentevella proudly asked econoffs to convey to USG officials in Washington that he had fulfilled his promise to spur Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to appoint a Civil Air Director General with good managerial capabilities.

¶3. (SBU) Former Department of National Defense Assistant Secretary and Air Force Major General Ciron was formally sworn-in as the first Philippine Civil Aviation Administration Director General around noon on July 7. His appointment represents a significant success for USG advocacy efforts over the weeks prior to and during President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's June meetings in Washington. In particular, the coordinated efforts of various State and FAA offices led to the highly effective briefing that FAA Deputy Director for Flight Standards Jon Allen and International Programs Manager Mel Cintron gave Congressman Puentevella on June 25, the substance of which Puentevella relayed to President Arroyo within hours. The telephone call notifying General Ciron of his appointment as Director General came while the presidential party was still in the United States.

¶4. (SBU) Within hours of his taking the oath of office, General Ciron convened a meeting of the entire civil aviation board, spoke with the seven International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) consultants currently working in Manila, cancelled a planned trip of Philippine civil aviation officials to Brussels, and met twice with Congressman Puentevella to discuss the FAA June 25 briefing.

¶5. (SBU) During the July 8 dinner, General Ciron said he hoped to meet with FAA officials soon to discuss a proposed FAA action plan and the possibility of postponing the ICAO review scheduled for November 2008. (Ciron understands that the Philippines is unlikely to pass this review.) General Ciron said he would welcome an FAA visit in early August, and sometime later would consider a trip to Washington meet FAA officials. He said he would not support any

trips by any other Philippine aviation officials to the United States prior to his own trip. Ciron noted that his Deputy Director General will be former Iloilo International Airport Administrator and Assistant Secretary of the Department of Transportation and Communications Eduardo "Red" Kapunan.

¶6. (SBU) U.S. and Philippine industry sources believe General Ciron has good potential to turn the Civil Aviation Administration in the right direction. He is deemed to be well-briefed on the issues at hand, mission-oriented, and open to suggestions. He took notes during the dinner meeting with econoffs and referred to notes of other meetings. Ciron is a former F-86 Sabrejet pilot and former staff aide to Senator Enrile when Enrile served as Secretary of Defense during the Marcos presidency.

KENNEY